



How To Lower The Risk Of SIDS In The African American Community



What Is SIDS?

SIDS is Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. It means that a baby dies quickly without warning and the reason is unknown. SIDS can happen to any family no matter what ethnic background they are, how much money they make, or where they live. SIDS is the same thing as crib death, but cribs do not cause SIDS. No one is to blame when a baby dies of SIDS. It cannot be predicted. We still do not know what causes babies to die of SIDS.



Ways To Lower The Risk Of SIDS

The proper care of an infant is important for everyone who looks after a baby...parents, family members, grandparents, foster parents, childcare providers, babysitters, and other caregivers.

For years parents were told to place their babies to sleep on their stomach. However, studies have shown, by placing your baby to sleep on his/her back and following a few simple baby care practices, you can lower your baby's chance of dying of SIDS.

Place your baby on his/her back to sleep

One of the most important things you can do to help lower the risk of SIDS is to **place your baby to sleep on his/her back**. Doctors now recommend that babies be placed on their back to sleep. Keep in mind that:

- Some babies don't like sleeping on their backs at first, but most get used to it quickly.
- Babies able to roll over on their own should not be forced to stay on their back.
- Babies should be placed in a variety of positions while awake. Tummy time is important so your baby can play and explore their world. This will help build arm, neck and shoulder muscles, too.

Remember, no smoking anything around your baby

- SIDS is more common among those babies who are exposed to smoke.

- Smoking while you are pregnant can harm your growing baby.
- Smoke is not good for your baby. Babies exposed to smoke get sick more often and have more medical problems.
- **Always provide a smokefree environment around your baby.**

Your baby needs to sleep on a firm, flat surface

- It is unsafe for your baby to sleep on soft things like cushions, pillows, blankets, couches, sheepskins, foam pads or waterbeds. **Your baby should sleep on a firm mattress or other firm surface.**
- Remove pillows, stuffed toys, and bumper pads from where your baby sleeps.
- Make sure your baby's head and face stay uncovered during sleep.



Your baby needs to be kept warm, not hot

- If the room temperature is right for you, it will be right for your baby.
- As a general rule, dress your baby with the same amount of clothing that you are wearing.

Your baby needs to have regular check-ups and immunizations

- It is important that your baby receives routine physical exams and gets his/her baby shots on time.
- If your baby seems sick, call your doctor or clinic right away.

Breastfeed your baby

- **Breastfeeding your baby is the best choice.** Breastfed babies are healthier. Studies have shown that breastfeeding may lower the risk of SIDS.

Check With Your Doctor Or Nurse

Most babies should sleep on their back. But a few babies have health problems that might require them to sleep on their tummy. If your baby was born with a birth defect, was born before your due date, or has a breathing, lung or heart problem, be sure to talk to a doctor or nurse about which sleep position to use.

Some mothers worry that babies sleeping on their back may choke on spit-up or vomit during sleep. There is no evidence that sleeping on the back causes choking.

Millions of babies around the world sleep on their back and doctors have not found an increase in choking or other problems.

Remember, place your baby to sleep on his/her back...it's the safest position. If you have any questions about your baby's sleep position, talk to a nurse or doctor.

Enjoy Your Baby!

Most babies are born healthy and most stay that way. Don't let the fear of SIDS spoil your enjoyment of having a new baby.



For more information on SIDS or baby care practices, please call:

California SIDS Program
800-369-SIDS (7437)

or visit:

www.californiasids.com

Why It Is Important For You To Know About SIDS

SIDS is the major cause of death for babies from one month to one year of age. Far too many African American babies are born too early, too small, and die before their first birthday.

In California the number of SIDS deaths has been decreasing dramatically except in the African American community where babies continue to die of SIDS at a high rate. In fact, an African American baby is more than two times as likely to die of SIDS than babies of other races. But, there are ways for you to help lower your baby's risk of SIDS.



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